



Hon. Robert T. Matsui

Member of Congress

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Robert T. Matsui

Serving California's 5th District

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CONTACT: ELIZABETH LIETZ
(202) 225-7163/(202) 225-0564

REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN ROBERT T. MATSUI ON THE IRAQ SUPPLEMENTAL *"Our troops deserve better."*

"In October 2002, I voted against the war in Iraq because there were other viable options the Bush Administration should have pursued before sending our troops into harm's way. The Administration then moved too hastily in invading Iraq without a clear vision for how to bring our troops home. We were prepared to win the war, but we were not prepared to keep the peace.

"In April of this year, we approved \$60 billion the Administration requested for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Now, just five months later, the President is asking for an additional \$87 billion without accounting for how the original funds were spent.

"I cannot in all good conscience vote for this request. The Bush Administration has not presented a coherent, credible plan to the American people to address any of the challenges facing our soldiers in Iraq.

"I supported an alternative plan offered by Representative David Obey (D-WI), which was voted on yesterday. His proposal gives our troops the equipment they need to conduct their mission in Iraq, requires the Administration to account for how they are spending the supplemental funds, and ensures international funding and cooperation.

"The Obey proposal requires the Administration to account for the funds from the previous war supplemental and for how additional funding will be used to support both the military and reconstruction efforts. Congress should not agree to provide the Administration additional funds without knowing how they will be spent.

"In addition, by internationalizing reconstruction efforts in Iraq, the Obey proposal ensures American taxpayers do not shoulder this burden alone.

"We have all heard about the deplorable conditions our soldiers are operating in as they carry out their important mission in Iraq. Our troops lack even the most basic equipment, such as bullet-proof Kevlar vests, to keep themselves safe. The drinking water is impure at nine out of the ten American bases in Iraq, because the Bush Administration did not provide needed water purification equipment.

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“When they are given much-needed leave for a visit back to the United States, they have to buy their own tickets from their point of entry to their homes, creating a significant financial burden on the troops and their families.

“This is how the Bush Administration treats our soldiers in combat and their \$87 billion proposal does nothing to fix this. Our troops deserve better.”

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